

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 ACDA-07 IO-13 A-01
AID-05 OMB-01 OPR-02 SCA-01 MCT-01 SY-05 TRSE-00 EB-08
COME-00 INT-05 OES-06 FEAE-00 AGRE-00 /122 W
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O P 281403Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2859
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 208
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
CIA WASHDC
COMSIXTHFLT
COMPHIBRON SIX
COM THREE FOUR MAU
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 0368

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JANUARY 27-28

REF: BEIRUT 0323 (DTG 261611Z JAN 77)
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1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS WELCOMES SECRETARY
OF STATE VANCE'S TRIP "BEFORE" FEB 20. PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS
SAYS ONLY A RECONSTITUTED LEBANESE ARMY CAN "SOLVE THE
PROBLEM OF THE SOUTH." THE ASF HAS OCCUPIED SEVERAL SMALL
PORTS. A NEW SYRIAN BRIGADE HAS ENTERED LEBANON, ACCORDING
TO LEBANESE MILITARY SOURCES. NO APPARENT FURTHER ASF

MOVES IN THE SOUTH. A SUNNI DELEGATION HAS GONE TO DAMASCUS. THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT, UNDER OBVIOUS PRESSURE, IS BICKERING. THE CAR OF THE LIBYAN CHARGE WAS DESTROYED. END SUMMARY.

2. BOUTROS ON DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY AFFECTING LEBANON. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS TOLD THE PRESS ON JAN 27 THAT SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE WOULD VISIT LEBANON "BEFORE" FEB 20. HE HAD INVITED THE SECRETARY "SO THAT LEBANON WOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED FROM HIS DIPLOMATIC (MID-EAST) TRIP, AND SSO THAT THE UNITED STATES COULD PROVE THAT IT DOES NOT NEGLECT LEBANON, NEITHER WITH REGARD TO HER INTERNAL PROBLEMS, NOR TO HER ROLE IN THE SOLUTION OF REGIONAL PROBLEM."

3. BOUTROS SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS LEBANON'S POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WITH UN SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM DUE ON FEB 7. (BOUTROS HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH WALDHEIM WOULD FOCUS ON ECONOMIC AID.) BOUTROS ALSO INDICATED FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUERINGAUD WOULD VISIT LEBANON "WITHIN A FEW DAYS" OF THE VISITS OF SECRETARY VANCE AND WALDHEIM.

4. AL-HOSS PRESS CONFERENCE. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS ON JAN 26, PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS SAID THAT SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE'S VISIT TO LEBANON "CONSTITUTES A POSITIVE STEP IN OUR EYES WHICH WILL ALLOW LEBANON TO EXPLAIN HER PROBLEMS TO US LEADERS
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AS WELL AS HIS CURRENT RECONSTRUCTION NEEDS."

5. ASKED IF "THE ENTRY OF THE ASF IN THE SOUTH" COULD PROVOKE AN ISRAELI MILITARY RESPONSE, AL-HOSS REPLIED THAT "SUCH A REACTION IS POSSIBLE, AND THAT IS WHY THE ARAB SECURITY FORCES HAVE NOT PENETRATED DEEPLY INTO SOUTH LEBANON." HE ADDED THAT "ONLY THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUTH, SINCE THE ARMY CAN TAKE UP POSITIONS ANYWHERE IN THE AREA, WHILE THE ASF CANNOT."

6. ON FOREIGN AID, AL-HOSS SAID THAT THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAD GIVEN LEBANON "NO PRECISE INDICATION" ON THE AMOUNT OF FORM OF CREDITS THEY WOULD PROVIDE. (RECENT PRESS STORIES HAVE ALLEGED THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAD ALREADY PLEDGED \$500 MILLION TO REBUILD THE PUBLIC SECTOR.) AL-HOSS ALSO DENIED THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAD ATTACHED ANY POLITICAL CONDITIONS TO THEIR AID.

7. FINALLY, AL-HOSS ADMITTED HIS GOVERNMENT HAD
"FAILED" IN ITS EFFORTS TO UNIFY ALL THE COUNTRY'S NEWS
BROADCASTS. SOME PRIVATE RADIO STATIONS HAD NOT
"SUBMITTED" TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CENSORSHIP.

8. ASF MOVES INTO PORTS.
THE ASF HAS MOVED INTO SEVERAL SMALL PORTS ALONG THE
LEBANESE COAST AND ORDERED SHIPS MOORED THERE TO
PROCEED TO BEIRUT OR HAVE THEIR GOODS CONFISCATED.
ANNOUNCED AS OCCUPIED BY AN ASF COMMUNIQUE WERE: THE
NATIONAL MOVEMENT PORT OF JIYE (ABOUT 10 KILOMETERS
SOUTH OF DAMOUR); THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PORT OF DBAYE
(ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS NORTH OF BEIRUT); AND THE
PHALANGE PORTS OF AQUAMARINA (ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF
JOUNIEH), KFAR ABEIDA (ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS SOUTH OF
BATROUN), AND SALATTA (ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS NORTH OF BATROUN).

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
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9. THE ASF HAS ALSO REINFORCED ITS TROOPS AT THE DOWRA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS CENTER IN THE NORTHERN BEIRUT SUBURBS, ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIQUE. ENTREPRENEUR BOUTROS EL-HURI HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN IMPORTING PETROLEUM THERE ILLEGALLY. THE COMMUNIQUE MADE NO CONFIDENTIAL

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REFERENCE TO THE PORT OF JOUNIEH, WHICH PRESUMABLY WILL REMAIN OPEN. ASF TROOPS HAVE BEEN STATIONED IN THE JOUNIEH AREA FOR SOME TIME.

10. MOST OF THE OCCUPIED "PORTS" ARE ONLY IMPROVISED LANDING SITES WHICH SPRANG UP AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF BEIRUT PORT. THEY HAVE BEEN USED NOT ONLY TO IMPORT WEAPONS AND SUPPLIES FOR THE VARIOUS ARMED FACTIONS, BUT ALSO TO BRING IN CONSUMER GOODS WITHOUT PAYING CUSTOMS TAXES. PRICES FOR CIGARETTES AND SCOTCH WHISKEY HAVE PROBABLY BEEN CHEAPER IN LEBANON THAN ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

11. SYRIAN REINFORCEMENTS.
THE 52ND BRIGADE OF THE SYRIAN 9TH ARMY DIVISION HAS MOVED INTO THE CHRISTIAN AREAS OF BEIRUT FROM SYRIA OVER THE LAST WEEK, ACCORDING TO LEBANESE MILITARY SOURCES. (A SYRIAN BRIGADE NORMALLY HAS A STRENGTH OF 4,000.) A RANKING PHALANGIST TELLS US THE RIGHTIST MILITARY COMMAND IS CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT IT REGARDS AS SYRIAN EFFORTS TO "BA'ATHIZE" LEBANON. SYRIAN TROOPS, THEY CLAIM, ARE PUBLICLY SELLING THE SYRIAN BA'ATH JOURNAL "AL THAWRA."

12. SOUTH LEBANON.
AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF SHRILL ISRAELI WARNINGS, WE STILL HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT THE ASF IS SOUTH OF NABATIYAH, ITSELF NORTH OF THE LITANI. THE BEIRUT PRESS JAN 27 PROMINENTLY REPORTED US CHARGE'S CALL ON SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE KAMAL AL-ASSAD, AFTER WHICH AL-ASSAD SAID THE SOUTH WAS THE PRINCIPLE SUBJECT DISCUSSED.

13. SUNNI DELEGATION IN DAMASCUS. FORMER PRIME MINISTER ABADLLAH YAFI AND TAKIEDDINE SOLH, REPRESENTING THE CONSERVATIVE SUNNI ISLAMIC COUNCIL, WENT TO DAMASCUS ON JAN 27
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TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE KFUR FRONT'S JAN 23
ENDORSEMENT OF "PLURALITY." ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR, YAFI
AND SOLH WILL TELL SYRIAN AUTHORITIES:

A. THE MUSLIMS IN LEBANON FAVOR ADMINISTRATIVE
DECENTRALIZATION BUT REINFORCED POLITICAL UNITY.
B. THE "CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT" SHOULD BE THE
"BASIS FOR DISCUSSION" OF LEBANON'S POLITICAL FUTURE.
(THE "CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT" IS A RADIO BROADCAST
WHICH FORMER PRESIDENT SULEIMAN FRANGIE MADE FROM
DAMASCUS FEB 14, 1976 AND WHICH ENDORSED THE
TRADITIONAL CONFESSONAL DIVISION OF POWER AS THE BASIS
OF LEBANESE POLITICS, BUT WITH EQUAL CHRISTIAN-JUSLIM
PROPORTIONS.)

14. NATIONAL MOVEMENT BICKERING.
THE CENTRAL POLITICAL COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT
HAS SUSPENDED ITS MEETINGS BECAUSE OF INTERNAL
DISSENSION, ACCORDING TO RIGHTIST AL BAYRAQ. THE
MARONITE PAPER FURTHER CLAIMED THREE FACTIONS WERE
COMPETING FOR CONTROL OF THE COUNCIL: A) THE
COMMUNISTS, WHO ADVOCATED "CONTINUED EXTREMISM;" B)
THE MODERATES, WHO CALLED FOR COOPERATION WITH SYRIA;
AND C) KAMAL JUNBLATT, WHO WAS INTERESTED ONLY IN
PRESERVING HIS OWN POLITICAL POSITION. SEPARATELY,
KAMAL JUNBLATT AND A GROUP OF LEADING NASSERISTS CALLED
ON THE GRAND MUFTI, REPORTEDLY TO DISCUSS A NEW
ISLAMIC NATIONAL CONGRESS. (JUNBLATT HAD PREVIOUSLY
CLAIMED ON JAN 21 THAT HE WAS RETIING FROM POLITICS.
SEE JAN 24 SITREP.)

15. LIBYAN CHARGE'S CAR DESTROYED.
AN UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL BLEW UP THE UNOCCUPIED CAR OF THE
LIBYAN CHARGE IN FRONT OF HIS RESIDENCE ON RUE VERDUN
IN WEST BEIRUT ON JAN 27, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES.
THERE WERE NO INJURIES.

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Message Attributes

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